

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications with at least one remote source of advertisements via a communications network, comprising:

- an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements from the at least one remote source, during one or more advertisement download sessions;
- an advertisement storage function that stores the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device;
- an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements on a display associated with the client device;
- an audit function that compiles ad-related statistical data relating to the downloaded advertisements, wherein the ad-related statistical data includes display event-related data regarding advertisements that were displayed during a prescribed audit interval;
- an audit data transmit function that transmits the ad-related statistical data to a prescribed server system,

wherein:

- the audit data transmit function generates a send audit data display window that requests the user's permission to transmit the ad-related statistical data to the prescribed server system; and
- the audit data transmit function transmits the ad-related statistical data only in response to a user's grant of permission to do so.

2. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the ad-related statistical data facilitates analysis of the effectiveness of the software regarding presentation of advertisements to the user.

3. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the display event-related data includes display time data for advertisements that were displayed during the prescribed audit interval.

4. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the ad-related statistical data is

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2 maintained as a log that is rotated at prescribed rollover intervals.

5. The software as set forth in Claim 4, wherein the prescribed rollover intervals
2 correspond to the prescribed audit intervals.

6. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated in response to a send audit data request transmitted by the prescribed server system.

7. The software as set forth in Claim 6, wherein:
2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance
4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to a
statistical sampling of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

8. The software as set forth in Claim 6, wherein:
2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance
4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to random
ones of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

9. The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising a client information
2 function that compiles client information that includes software usage data reflecting usage of
the software by the user.

10. The software as set forth in Claim 9, wherein the client information further
2 includes user demographic data.

11. The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising a client information
2 function that compiles client information that includes user demographic data.

12. The software as set forth in Claim 9, wherein the client information further

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2 includes features of the software used by the user.

13. The software as set forth in Claim 9, wherein the client information further
2 includes user-selected settings.

14. The software as set forth in Claim 10, wherein the client information further
2 includes features of the software used by the user.

15. The software as set forth in Claim 10, wherein the client information further
2 includes user-selected settings.

16. The software as set forth in Claim 9, further comprising a client information
2 transmit function that transmits the client information to the prescribed server system.

17. The software as set forth in Claim 10, further comprising a client information
2 transmit function that transmits the client information to the prescribed server system.

18. The software as set forth in Claim 12, further comprising a client information
2 transmit function that transmits the client information to the prescribed server system.

19. The software as set forth in Claim 13, further comprising a client information
2 transmit function that transmits the client information to the prescribed server system.

20. The software as set forth in Claim 16, wherein the prescribed server system and
2 the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

21. The software as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a producer of the software.

22. The software as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

23. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the communications network is the
2 Internet.

24. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the software is e-mail software.

25. The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising a custom installer
2 function that generates a distributor identifier that identifies a distributor that distributed the
software for use on the client device.

26. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the prescribed server system and the
2 at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

27. The software as set forth in Claim 26, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a producer of the software.

28. The software as set forth in Claim 26, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

29. The software as set forth in Claim 17, wherein the prescribed server system and
2 the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

30. The software as set forth in Claim 29, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a producer of the software.

31. The software as set forth in Claim 29, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

32. The software as set forth in Claim 18, wherein the prescribed server system and
2 the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

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33. The software as set forth in Claim 32, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a producer of the software.

34. The software as set forth in Claim 32, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

35. The software as set forth in Claim 19, wherein the prescribed server system and
2 the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

36. The software as set forth in Claim 35, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a producer of the software.

37. The software as set forth in Claim 35, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

38. The software as set forth in Claim 25, further comprising a client information
2 function that compiles client information that includes the distributor identifier.

39. The software as set forth in Claim 38, further comprising a client information
2 transmit function that transmits the client information to the prescribed server system.

40. The software as set forth in Claim 39, wherein the prescribed server system and
2 the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

41. Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications with at
2 least one remote source of advertisements via a communications network, comprising:
an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements from the at least
4 one remote source, during one or more advertisement download sessions;
an advertisement storage function that stores the downloaded advertisements on a
6 storage medium associated with the client device;
an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the

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8 stored advertisements on a display associated with the client device;

an audit function that compiles audit data including software usage data reflecting
10 usage of the software by the user during a prescribed audit interval;

an audit data transmit function that transmits the audit data to a prescribed server
12 system, wherein:

the audit data transmit function generates a send audit data display window
14 that requests the user's permission to transmit the audit data to the prescribed server system;
and

16 the audit data transmit function transmits the audit data only in response to a
user's grant of permission to do so.

42. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data is maintained as a
2 log that is rotated at prescribed rollover intervals.

43. The software as set forth in Claim 42, wherein the prescribed rollover intervals
2 correspond to the prescribed audit intervals.

44. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated in response to a send audit data request transmitted by the prescribed server system.

45. The software as set forth in Claim 44, wherein:
2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance
4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to a
statistical sampling of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

46. The software as set forth in Claim 44, wherein:
2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance
4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to random
ones of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

47. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data further includes features of the software used by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

48. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data further includes user demographic data.

49. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data further includes features of the software used by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

50. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data further includes settings selected by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

51. The software as set forth in Claim 41, further comprising a custom installer function that generates a distributor identifier that identifies a distributor that distributed the software for use on the client device.

52. The software as set forth in Claim 52, wherein the audit data further includes the distributor identifier.

53. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data further includes ad-related statistical data relating to the downloaded advertisements.

54. The software as set forth in Claim 53, wherein the ad-related statistical data includes display event-related data regarding advertisements that were displayed during the prescribed audit interval.

55. The software as set forth in Claim 53, wherein the ad-related statistical data facilitates analysis of the effectiveness of the software regarding presentation of advertisements to the user.

2 56. The software as set forth in Claim 54, wherein the display event-related data includes display time data for advertisements that were displayed during the prescribed audit interval.

2 57. The software as set forth in Claim 54, wherein the ad-related statistical data further includes clickthrough data regarding each advertisement that was clicked on by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

2 58. The software as set forth in Claim 53, wherein the ad-related statistical data includes clickthrough data regarding each advertisement that was clicked on by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

2 59. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the prescribed server system and the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

2 60. The software as set forth in Claim 59, wherein the advertisement distribution server system is managed by a producer of the software.

2 61. The software as set forth in Claim 59, wherein the advertisement distribution server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

2 62. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

63. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the software is e-mail software.

2 64. Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications with at least one remote source of advertisements via a communications network, comprising:
an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements from the at least
4 one remote source, during one or more advertisement download sessions;
an advertisement storage function that stores the downloaded advertisements on a

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6 storage medium associated with the client device;

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the
8 stored advertisements on a display associated with the client device;

an audit function that compiles audit data including software usage data reflecting
10 features of the software used by the user during a prescribed audit interval;

an audit data transmit function that transmits the audit data to a prescribed server
12 system, wherein:

the audit data transmit function generates a send audit data display window
14 that requests the user's permission to transmit the audit data to the prescribed server system;
and

the audit data transmit function transmits the audit data only in response to a
16 user's grant of permission to do so.

65. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the audit data is maintained as a
2 log that is rotated at prescribed rollover intervals.

66. The software as set forth in Claim 65, wherein the prescribed rollover intervals
2 correspond to the prescribed audit intervals.

67. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated in response to a send audit data request transmitted by the prescribed server system.

68. The software as set forth in Claim 67, wherein:
2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance
4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to a
statistical sampling of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

69. The software as set forth in Claim 67, wherein:
2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance

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4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to random
ones of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

2 70. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the audit data further includes user
demographic data.

2 71. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the audit data further includes
settings selected by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

2 72. The software as set forth in Claim 64, further comprising a custom installer
function that generates a distributor identifier that identifies a distributor that distributed the
software for use on the client device.

2 73. The software as set forth in Claim 72, wherein the audit data further includes the
distributor identifier.

2 74. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the audit data further includes ad-
related statistical data relating to the downloaded advertisements.

2 75. The software as set forth in Claim 74, wherein the ad-related statistical data
includes display event-related data regarding advertisements that were displayed during the
prescribed audit interval.

2 76. The software as set forth in Claim 74, wherein the ad-related statistical data
facilitates analysis of the effectiveness of the software regarding presentation of
advertisements to the user.

2 77. The software as set forth in Claim 75, wherein the display event-related data
includes display time data for advertisements that were displayed during the prescribed audit
interval.

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78. The software as set forth in Claim 75, wherein the ad-related statistical data further includes clickthrough data regarding each advertisement that was clicked on by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

79. The software as set forth in Claim 74, wherein the ad-related statistical data includes clickthrough data regarding each advertisement that was clicked on by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

80. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the prescribed server system and the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

81. The software as set forth in Claim 80, wherein the advertisement distribution server system is managed by a producer of the software.

82. The software as set forth in Claim 80, wherein the advertisement distribution server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

83. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

84. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the software is e-mail software.

85. Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications with at least one remote source of advertisements via a communications network, comprising:

an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements from the at least one remote source, during one or more advertisement download sessions;

an advertisement storage function that stores the downloaded advertisements on a storage medium associated with the client device;

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the stored advertisements on a display associated with the client device;

an audit function that compiles at least two categories of audit data, including

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software usage data reflecting features of the software by the user during a prescribed audit interval, and ad-related statistical data relating to the downloaded advertisements, wherein the ad-related statistical data includes display event-related data regarding advertisements that were displayed during the prescribed audit interval;

an audit data transmit function that transmits one or more categories of the audit data to a prescribed server system, wherein:

the audit data transmit function generates a send audit data display window that requests the user's permission to transmit each category of the audit data to the prescribed server system; and

the audit data transmit function transmits only the category(ies) of the audit data for which the user has granted permission to transmit.

86. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the audit data is maintained as a log that is rotated at prescribed rollover intervals.

87. The software as set forth in Claim 86, wherein the prescribed rollover intervals correspond to the prescribed audit intervals.

88. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the audit data transmit function is activated in response to a send audit data request transmitted by the prescribed server system.

89. The software as set forth in Claim 88, wherein:
the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to a statistical sampling of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

90. The software as set forth in Claim 88, wherein:
the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to random

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ones of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

91. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the ad-related statistical data facilitates analysis of the effectiveness of the software regarding presentation of advertisements to the user.

92. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the display event-related data includes display time data for advertisements that were displayed during the prescribed audit interval.

93. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the ad-related statistical data further includes clickthrough data regarding each advertisement that was clicked on by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

94. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the prescribed server system and the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

95. The software as set forth in Claim 94, wherein the advertisement distribution server system is managed by a producer of the software.

96. The software as set forth in Claim 94, wherein the advertisement distribution server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

97. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

98. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the software is e-mail software.

99. Software for use on a client device that is configured for communications with at least one remote source of advertisements via a communications network, comprising:
an advertisement download function that downloads advertisements from the at least

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4 one remote source, during one or more advertisement/download sessions;

an advertisement storage function that stores the downloaded advertisements on a
6 storage medium associated with the client device;

an advertisement display function that effects display of at least selected ones of the
8 stored advertisements on a display associated with the client device;

an audit function that compiles a plurality of categories of audit data regarding
10 activities of the user and/or client device during a prescribed audit interval;

an audit data transmit function that transmits one or more categories of the audit data
12 to a prescribed server system, wherein:

the audit data transmit function generates a send audit data display window
14 that requests the user's permission to transmit each category of the audit data to the prescribed
server system; and

16 the audit data transmit function transmits only the category(ies) of the audit
data for which the user has granted permission to transmit.

100. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the audit data is maintained as a
2 log that is rotated at prescribed rollover intervals.

101. The software as set forth in Claim 100, wherein the prescribed rollover intervals
2 correspond to the prescribed audit intervals.

102. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated in response to a send audit data request transmitted by the prescribed server system.

103. The software as set forth in Claim 102, wherein:
2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance
4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to a
statistical sampling of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

104. The software as set forth in Claim 102, wherein:

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2 the prescribed server system includes an auditing manager function; and
the auditing manager function generates the send audit data request in accordance
4 with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to random
ones of a population of client devices, at prescribed times.

105. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the prescribed server system and
2 the at least one remote source are components of an advertisement distribution server system.

106. The software as set forth in Claim 105, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a producer of the software.

107. The software as set forth in Claim 105, wherein the advertisement distribution
2 server system is managed by a distributor of the software.

108. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the communications network is
2 the Internet.

109. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the software is e-mail software.

110. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the audit data comprises at least
2 two of the following categories of audit data:

software usage data reflecting features of the software used by the user during the
4 prescribed audit interval;

ad-related statistical data relating to the downloaded advertisements, wherein the ad-
6 related statistical data includes display event-related data regarding advertisements that were
displayed during the prescribed audit interval;

8 user demographic data; and

settings selected by the user during the prescribed audit interval.

111. The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising an installer function for
2 installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium.

112. The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising an installer function for
2 installing the software on the client device.

113. The software as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising an installer function for
2 installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium associated with the client
device.

114. The software as set forth in Claim 41, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium.

115. The software as set forth in Claim 41, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on the client device.

116. The software as set forth in Claim 41, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium associated with the client
device.

117. The software as set forth in Claim 64, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium.

118. The software as set forth in Claim 64, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on the client device.

119. The software as set forth in Claim 64, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium associated with the client
device.

120. The software as set forth in Claim 85, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium.

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121. The software as set forth in Claim 85, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on the client device.

122. The software as set forth in Claim 85, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium associated with the client
device.

123. The software as set forth in Claim 99, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium.

124. The software as set forth in Claim 99, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on the client device.

125. The software as set forth in Claim 99, further comprising an installer function
2 for installing the software on a computer-readable storage medium associated with the client
device.

126. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the advertisement display function
2 effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements when the client
device is offline.

127. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the advertisement display function
2 effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements while the user is
composing and/or reading e-mail messages.

128. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the advertisement display
2 function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements when the
client device is offline.

129. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the advertisement display
2 function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements while the

~~user is composing and/or reading e-mail messages.~~

130. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements when the client device is offline.

131. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements while the user is composing and/or reading e-mail messages.

132. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements when the client device is offline.

133. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements while the user is composing and/or reading e-mail messages.

134. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements when the client device is offline.

135. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the advertisement display function effects display of the at least selected ones of the stored advertisements while the user is composing and/or reading e-mail messages.

136. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the audit data transmit function is activated randomly.

137. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the audit data transmit function is activated at random times.

138. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated randomly.

139. The software as set forth in Claim 41, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated at random times.

140. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated randomly.

141. The software as set forth in Claim 64, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated at random times.

142. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated randomly.

143. The software as set forth in Claim 85, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated at random times.

144. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated randomly.

145. The software as set forth in Claim 99, wherein the audit data transmit function is
2 activated at random times.

146. The software as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the ad-related statistical data
2 further includes clickthrough data regarding each advertisement that was clicked on by the
user during the prescribed audit interval.